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A KANSAS BEAVER.*(Castor canadensis Kuhl.)*

By L. L. DYCHE, Lawrence.

THE beaver in Kansas is a rare animal, and it will not be many years until it will be placed on the list with the deer, buffalo, bear, and other animals that have become extinct. There is no law to protect them, and the old beaver trappers will travel miles and miles to get just one more, each trapper making the excuse that if he does not catch the beaver the other fellow will. Not many years ago it was a very common animal on most of the larger streams in Kansas. The first winter (1877 and 1878) I spent at Lawrence there were a number of beavers living within a mile of the city. They had their homes on the banks of the Kansas river and some of its small islands. During the winter of 1882 and 1883 I secured some for specimens that were taken near Lawrence. However, I have not heard of a beaver being taken anywhere near Lawrence since the winter of 1888 and 1889, until November of this year, when one was taken within a few miles of Lawrence. This animal was an old male. It was trapped by J. C. Saunders, an old beaver trapper, the same person who trapped beavers for me in 1882 and 1883. This last beaver, that we have any record of, was taken November 12, 1907, two and one-half miles east of Lecompton and about nine miles up the river, or west, from Lawrence. The animal has been known to have been in existence in that locality for some months.

I have heard at different times during the past few years of a family or two of beavers that were still living on some of the western branches of the Kansas river. This animal probably came down the river and was perhaps the sole survivor of some exterminated family, as he was living as an old bachelor. The animal was a very fine specimen, being a large old male that weighed forty-nine and one-half pounds, after it had been out of the water twenty-four hours and after, as dissection showed, it had lost all its blood. It was said to have weighed fifty-four pounds when it was first caught. Mr. Saunders tells me that the largest beaver he ever caught weighed sixty pounds.

To indicate the size of this animal, and to preserve a record of a large Kansas beaver, I will give some of the most important measurements, and some general notes, that I made of the animal while it was still in the flesh.

The measurements were made in inches and hundredths, and were taken from the animal's body while it was stretched out flat upon the floor:

Length from end of nose to end of tail (not stretched).....	42.00
Length from end of nose to end of tail (moderately stretched)....	45.00
Length from end of nose to end of outstretched hind foot.....	35.50
Length of hind foot from heel to end of longest (middle) toe.....	7.00
Greatest width of hind foot (web stretched).....	6.75
Greatest width of web between toes (web stretched).....	2.00
Length of front foot to end of longest toe.....	3.25
Distance from end of nose to end of ear (stretched back).....	6.50
Distance from tip of ear to tip of ear (moderately stretched)....	5.25
Natural height of ear.....	1.25
Natural width of ear.....	1.00
Width of ear when spread out flat.....	1.75
Distance from end of nose to center of eye (eyeball).....	3.00
Distance between eyes (center of eyeball to center of eyeball)....	2.90

TAIL.

Total length of tail vertebræ.....	18.25
Length of scaly portion of tail.....	11.00
Greatest width of scaly portion of tail.....	5.75
Thickest place in scaly portion of tail.....	1.50
Thickest place in middle of scaly tail.....	.75
Circumference at root of scaly portion of tail.....	10.65
Circumference of middle of scaly portion of tail.....	11.90

Body measurements, taken while the animal's body was lying flat upon its belly upon the floor:

Natural distance from head of femur bone to head of humerus....	17.00
Natural distance from head of femur back to where scaly portion of tail begins.....	10.00
Natural width of body behind shoulders.....	9.75
Natural width of middle (abdomen) of animal.....	12.25
Natural depth of middle (abdomen) of animal.....	5.25
Circumference behind the shoulder.....	26.00
Circumference of middle of abdomen.....	31.00
Circumference of neck.....	16.50

DIGESTIVE TRACT.

The entire length of digestive tract was 35 feet 1 inch, made up as follows: Esophagus, 11 inches; stomach, 13 inches; cæcum, 22 inches; small intestine 25 feet; large intestine, 42 inches; rectum, 34 inches.

The average width of the stomach was about four inches. The stomach was contracted to almost half its natural width

about one-third of the distance from the pyloric end. This was due to a sort of a valve or partition on the inside.

A reddish-looking gland three inches long and one inch thick was apparently spliced onto the stomach at the cardiac end where the esophagus enters. It had about a dozen little mouth-like openings into the stomach. Each opening and its surrounding lips was about as large as the end of a lead-pencil.

The cæcum was twenty-two inches long measured through the center portion, and twenty-five inches measured on the outside, and three and one-half inches wide at its larger or attached end; a foot from this end it was three inches wide. It would hold about three quarts, or nearly twice as much as the stomach.

The liver had six principal lobes and one or two smaller pieces, due to fissures in the lobes. The three larger lobes were each about seven inches long and from three to three and a half inches wide. The smaller lobes ranged from three to five inches long. In a general way the gall was one by two inches in size. The kidneys were shaped very much like a short Lima bean, and in size were three inches long, two and one-half inches wide and about an inch thick in the center. The spleen was four inches long by three-eighths of an inch in diameter, was round, and was dark red in appearance. The heart was about three inches long and two and one-half inches in diameter at its larger end.

We laid the animal on its back and dissected out the castoreum or bark glands and the oil-glands or sacks. The glands occupy a position between the pubis and the scaly part of the tail. This space is seven or eight inches long and nearly as wide, and covered with hair the same as the rest of the body. The bark glands were of a yellowish or light-brownish tinge in color. They were about five inches long and three in width. They were under the skin and some fat and muscular fascia and rested just back of the pubis. Just back of these bark glands and connected with them are the two oil-glands or sacks. They were about as long as the bark glands, but not much over an inch in diameter. Trappers prize the bark glands very highly for making a scent-bait for trapping other beavers. The oil-glands are also used in making a bait for trapping otters. The testicles were situated in front of the bark glands and rested one on either side and about two and one-half inches from the union of the pubic bones. In size they were about two by one inches.